

Reprinted from "The Sun" of August 30, 1914

SOCIALISM AND WAR

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WHILE so many tremendous questions growing out of the war are presenting themselves for consideration at the moment, it is well not to let all the small ones go by. One of these latter is the enthusiasm with which many good people are accepting the fallacy that the socialists are entitled to great credit for their humanitarian, far-seeing and peace-loving policies. They are applauded by many of the church people, and especially by the peace societies, because they are against war, against all battleships and forts, and armies and navies. They might add that they are also against the State militia and the police. Our church friends are entirely right. The Socialists do stand against all these things; but why? Not for reasons of humanity; not that they are opposed to the horrors of battle and the bloodshed of war, because they are not. In fact, they are in favor of those things and expect to use them all with the same ferocity with which they are now being used in Europe. What the socialists are working for is a revolution of their own through which they shall destroy "capitalism," including, of course, the capitalists, big and little, should they offer objection to being despoiled of their property. The Socialists are now against armies and navies and battleships and forts, and all the other panoply of war, because they do not want to have to meet those armies and navies when they undertake to confiscate the property of the world and take over the governments to

themselves. There is no excuse for intelligent people not understanding this, because the leaders of the Socialist Party do not disguise it in any way. They want everybody to know it and they will doubtless thank me for writing this article.

The ablest, most important and most responsible Socialist paper in the United States is *The New York Call*. Its editor became so disgusted with the maudlin, mushy misconstruction of Socialist motives that in his leading editorial in the issue of Saturday, August 15, under the caption, "Where We Stand," he furnishes material that ought to be interesting to those peace advocates who are making allies of the "Reds," and especially to the American Association for International Conciliation.

Lack of space forbids quoting in full the editorial in *The Call* referred to, but the following extracts will give a clear idea of its philosophy: (The italics in all quotations in this article are mine.)

"They (certain correspondents) make it necessary for us to state our position on the War, as regards the elements involved, and we propose to do it here and now in the plainest of plain language. Those who may be offended thereby may do as they please. They are not socialists. For in this matter we take our stand impregnably and unmistakably on this position of International Socialism.

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"We call attention to the fact that we give news concerning the War which no capitalist paper in this city or elsewhere dares to give, and which, if they get it, is universally suppressed. It is the news of the 'war against war,' THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS IN TURNING THIS CATASTROPHE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF FUTURE SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

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"In *The Call* office, there are Americans, Germans, Russians, British, French and even people from the Balkan States. But all stand for and desire but one thing out of this War—social revolution. That consideration *subordinates everything else*.

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"We want to see the workingmen of all these lands turn on their butchers and murderers, and

rend them into fragments, and stamp out forever the abominable class rule, the capitalism that has turned a continent into a shambles.

* * * * *

"And now the thing has started, we don't care how they do it, whether with cannon, musket and sabre, or with confiscation and legislation. Any old way that is most convenient, provided only that they do it.

* * * * *

"We have not the slightest interest in the so-called 'civilization' that it is claimed one or the other group is fighting for. It is the same thing in all cases—imperialism, militarism, dominion, wage-slavery, exploitation and capitalism.

* * * * *

"We have not started this thing (the War) and we hope that our correspondents will comprehend us when we say that, now that it is started, the most cold-blooded calculation on our part at the present moment is that they should all bleed each other to exhaustion so that the *coming social revolution may have an easier job of sweeping out the stinking fragments. We are through with protesting, mourning and deploring. THAT TIME HAS PASSED AND NOW WE STAND FOR DESTRUCTION—THE DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM.*"

On August 29, 1914, *The Call* used the following language, which not only reiterates the sentiments expressed in its editorial of August 15, but adds a contemptuous fling at the peace societies which have been coddling the Socialists:

"And it may be well to note also that we are by no means the peaceable people our opponents (the capitalist peace advocates) wish to pretend, in this situation. * * * We must not be confounded with the smooth prating knaves of The Hague Conference and the ordinary peace society. If it means literal war to put capitalism down and out, we are always ready to wage it for that object. * * * We have a deadly score to settle with the capitalist system, and despite what we may do now, or what we are forced to do, we never forget the ultimate enemy, and its supporters owe us nothing for the part any of us may take in the European

War, in any country. And unless we are grievously mistaken they will find that out as an aftermath of the present struggle."

That certainly is plain enough for the dullest to comprehend.

But this editorial in *The Call* expresses nothing new as to the true inwardness of the socialist advocacy of international peace. Their papers, periodicals and speeches are full of hatred toward capitalism, and they are agitating night and day along lines that they hope will lead to the overthrow of our present social institutions and result in the ushering in of the "Co-operative Commonwealth." Most of them openly advocate the confiscation of the property of the capitalists—which capitalists, it must not be forgotten, include the big and the little, the millions of farmers, the millions of savings bank depositors and the millions of stockholders in industrial, railroad and municipal utility corporations. While the right wing of the Socialist Party, the Political Actionists, hold out the idea that they hope to bring about this expropriation with the consent of the "expropriated" through the ballot, they do not hesitate to say that if necessary, they will join the left wing to bring about this overthrow with gun, cannon and dynamite. That the latter alternative is what they expect is well voiced by Victor Berger, in the following prediction which he made in his paper, the *Social-Democratic Herald*, in 1909:

"In view of the plutocratic law-making of the present day, it is easy to predict that the safety and hope of this country will finally lie in *one direction only—that of a violent and bloody revolution.*

"Therefore, I say, each of the 500,000 Socialist voters, and of the two million workingmen who instinctively incline our way, should, besides doing much reading and still more thinking, *also have a good rifle and the necessary rounds of ammunition in his home and be prepared to back up his ballot with his bullets if necessary.*"

H. M. Hyndman, of London, who is recognized as one of the foremost living exponents of Socialism, makes this rather disquieting suggestion:

"* * * Chemistry has placed at the disposal of the desperate and the needy, cheap and

powerful explosives, the full effects of which are as yet unknown. Every day adds new discoveries in this field; the dynamite of ideas is accompanied in the background by the dynamite of material force. *These modern explosives may easily prove to capitalism what gun-powder was to feudalism.*"

John Spargo, one of the leaders in the Socialist Party and a former member of its Executive Committee, makes this observation:

"* * * When the slaves answer the challenge of Socialism with a united war-cry for justice and economic freedom, *all who resist them will be swept away as chaff, before the fury of the gale. And that, I believe will be the result.* The despoiled and disinherited, urged by the mighty passion of Socialism, will rise and enter into full possession of their own, hurling into the dust of oblivion false and unjust religions, state crafts, and political economies."

The *Vorwaerts*, the leading socialist paper in Germany, puts it this way:

"The maintenance of militarism is for the bourgeoisie of to-day a life and death question; it is the only means they have of defending their domination against the proletariat."

The *Appeal to Reason*, a paper which claims a million circulation, testifies as follows:

"Labor demands all the products of its hands—and it is going to have them, let the consequences be what they will. *It may cause the slaughter and massacre of millions.* None has a right to live who will not help to produce the wealth that sustains the people of the planet."

Here is also a choice bit from a socialist Bible, the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels:

"They (the proletarians) have nothing of their own to secure and fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property."

"* * * Their ends (the Socialists') can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. *Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution!*"

Frederick Engels in his "Working Class of England" gives us this picture:

"The proletarians, driven to despair, will seize the torch which Stevens has reached to them; the vengeance of the people will come down with a wrath of which the rage of 1793 gives no true idea. The war of the poor against the rich will be the bloodiest ever waged. * * * It is too late for a peaceful solution. The classes are divided more and more sharply, the spirit of resistance penetrates the workers, the bitterness intensifies, the guerilla skirmishes become concentrated in more important battles, and soon a slight impulse will suffice to set the avalanche in motion. Then, indeed, will the war-cry resound, 'War to the palaces, peace to the cottages,' but then it will be too late for the rich to heware."

The socialist proposal in the matter of an army is that it shall be a citizens' affair; that is, that every citizen shall have a gun and that the citizens shall elect the officers of the army. William English Walling, one of the brainiest and best-posted International Socialists, throws a very useful, if sinister, light upon what this would mean:

"As long as armies continue to exist, Socialists the world over demand the arming of every citizen and the election of officers by the citizens. *Such an army would not be very useful against the people in case of a general strike or insurrection.*"

Mr. Walling's sinister suggestion as to the effectiveness of citizen soldiery in times of revolution finds ample warrant in the happenings in Paris during the Commune of 1870-71. Gustave Le Bon, writing of this, says:

"* * * The armies created by universal service are steadily tending to become nothing but an ill disciplined militia, and history teaches us what they are worth in the hour of danger. Let us remember that our 300,000 Gardes Nationales, at the time of the siege of Paris, found nothing better to do than create the Commune and burn the city. The famous advocate who passed by the only chance which offered itself of disarming the multitude, was later on obliged publicly to demand 'pardon of God and man' for having left them their arms. * * *

A thousand utterances in books, speeches and papers along the line of the above quotations could be given—but it would only be “piling Ossa on Pelion.”

That the socialists and anarchists (who are one in so far as their desire for the destruction of our present social fabric is concerned) have no illusions as to what it will cost in blood to secure their aims is clearly and certainly graphically shown by the following prediction by Proudhon on the future of Socialism:

“The social revolution could only end in an immense cataclysm, of which the immediate effect would be to lay waste the earth, and to confine society in a straight-waistcoat; and if it were possible that such a state of things should continue only a few weeks, to kill three or four millions of men by an unforeseen famine. When the Government is without resources; when the country is without commerce and without produce; when Paris, starving, blockaded by the provinces, receives from them neither money nor provisions; when the workers, demoralized by the politics of their clubs and the idleness of their shops, seek their subsistence as best they may; when the State requires the jewels and plate of the citizens to send to the Mint; when house-to-house requisitions are the only means of collecting taxes; when the first granary is pillaged, the first house entered, the first church profaned, the first torch kindled, the first blood spilt, the first head fallen—when the abomination of desolation has come upon all France—oh, then you will know what a social revolution is; an unbridled multitude, in arms, drunk with vengeance and with fury, armed with pikes, with hatchets, with naked swords; with cleavers and with hammers; the city mournful and silent; the police at the threshold; opinions suspected, words listened to, tears observed, sighs numbered, silence spied upon; espionage and denunciations; inexorable requisitions, forced and increasing loans, depreciated paper-money; war with neighbors on the frontiers, impitiable pro-consuls, the committee of public safety, a supreme body with a heart of brass; behold the fruits of the democratic and social revolution.”

So much for the “beautiful humanitarianism” of the Socialists in their vociferous cry for disarmament

and international peace. It is a joke and a ghastly one. But there are other jokes connected with this matter. An international peace association with a distinguished executive committee has just issued a pamphlet which doubtless its members never read, which, in addition to boasting of treasonable efforts of the Socialists to undermine the American army and navy, through advocacy of mutiny and desertion, contains the bombastic and ridiculous claims about what the Socialists have done and what they intended to do in case war was imminent. As to the undermining of the army and navy, space forbids an extended description of the efforts of the Socialists, but one illustration will suffice to give the spirit of all. The *Appeal to Reason*, quoted approvingly by Mr. George Allan England, the author of the pamphlet referred to, had a very systematic plan at work, namely that of sending bundles of *Appeals* to all army posts in the United States. One soldier boy, who was converted by this treasonable material, wrote a letter to the *Appeal to Reason*, boasting of his perfidy, and the editor answered, saying that it did his old heart good to receive the letter. The correspondence follows and speaks for itself:

Bridgeport, Ill., January 28, 1908.

Appeal to Reason, Girard, Kansas.

Dear Sirs: I was formally and officially tabooed by the plutes on the tenth day of last July, and they gave me a piece of yellow paper to certify that I am no longer worthy to be called a servant of the plutes. I had served a short time over three years in the organized mob called the Army of the United States when I fell in with a copy of the *Appeal*, and from that time forward I have been too much of a Socialist to serve in any army under arms to defend the Cause of the rich. I deserted the armed mob, and after one year they caught me and hence the eighteen months in prison and the little piece of yellow paper. Now, just to convince the Appeal Army that I was not asleep all of this time I will write an article for the *Appeal* to commence with the first issue in March. If you will accept this work of course it will be free to the *Appeal* for the purpose of enlightening the people on the subject of life in the United States Army. I will write it in five manuscripts, of one thousand words each, as follows:

1. "Enlisting"—Telling of the falsehoods used to procure recruits.

2. "Drilling"—Explaining the degraded life of a soldier after he has been assigned.

3. "Fighting"—Telling of conditions in the Phillipine Islands.

4. "Deserting"—In this article will be set forth the cause for the large number of desertions.

5. "The United States Military Prison"—Telling of life in the United States military prison at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

Hoping this will interest you, I am, yours for the Cause.

C. HUDSPETH.

Office of *Appeal to Reason*

Girard, Kansas, Feb. 19th.

Mr. C. Hudspeth.

Dear Comrade: I never received a letter that did my old heart more good than the one printed above. It shows the power of the *Appeal*—and among a class of men we need to reach. I want to send a bundle of five to every Army Post in the United States and its foreign possessions. I think you will agree that this offers a splendid opportunity to do work that will count, and count big! If you believe as I do, send a dollar (or five dollars) to the Agitation League. There are 855 United States Army Posts. A bundle of five to each of their reading rooms will reach 100,000 men who are just as susceptible to our teachings as the comrade above.

Yours for the Revolution,

J. A. WAYLAND.

According to the claims of Mr. England in his pamphlet, one would think that in every threatened trouble for the past forty years the Socialists, by calling mass meetings which didn't mass and by calling general strikes which didn't strike, "scared the stuffing" out of the crowned heads and there wouldn't be any war,—just like that,—so to speak. Their general strike was, of course, intended to paralyze the Government railways and stop the mining of coal and the production of food and arms. In other words, as Mr England would have it in his pamphlet, the Socialists of Europe were sitting on

the safety valve and practically holding the chancelleries of that continent in the palms of their hands so that all they had to do was to push one button and the Kaiser would jump, push another button and the Czar would turn pale, and then they had other buttons to push for King George and the rest of the potentates.

Mr. England in his article quotes Mr. Charles Edward Russell on this tremendous influence of the Socialists of Europe, referring especially to the Basel Socialist Congress, as follows:

"The real power of the world had spoken, that was all. Wonderful lesson! You get a glimpse of new things possible and impending, such as were never hoped for except in dreams. One word from the International Socialist Party, and reason resumes her reign in the excited brain of every statesman in Europe. * * * This Congress voiced the final determination of millions of workers; and before that power, all other power crumpled up. The Prime Ministers and Chancellors and other gentlemen that usually live in the limelight became some absurd kind of puppets or lay figures."

Well, Mr. Russell was over there when the present little insurrection broke out but evidently the buttons got mixed up or else his sabotage friend cut the wires. Even two days before the official declaration of war by Russia in defense of Servia, one hundred thousand working men in St. Petersburg, who had been on strike for some weeks against the railroads, municipal utilities and other important industries, voluntarily declared the strike off to show patriotism and love for their country. Emil Vandervelde, the great Belgian Socialist, who was a prominent figure in the Basel Congress, entered the war cabinet of Belgium and supported the Government when war threatened; and this notwithstanding that at this wonderful Basel Congress he declared: "Because all governments are capitalist governments, we openly declare that patriotism and socialism are utterly contradictory." In England, the labor members of Parliament, almost to a man, supported the war measures proposed by the Government. In Germany, in which country the Socialist Party boasts of over 4,000,000 members with more than a hundred members in the Reichstag, where there was a possibility of their doing some paralyzing, we find that they not only unanimously supported the Kaiser's

war measures but that their leaders have gone to the front. At first, the Socialist papers exploited a rumor that Liebknecht, the hundred Socialist members of the Reichstag, and Rosa Luxembourg had been executed for standing by the principles of the Basel Congress. Karl H. Von Wiegand, staff correspondent of the United Press, which association is friendly to the Socialists, so much so that its matter is run in all of the Socialist papers, said in his dispatch from The Hague, Holland, August 17, referring to these rumors:

"These stories are absolute lies. Not a single Socialist has been shot. Not one has been arrested. Liebknecht is fighting for the Fatherland, as are hundreds of thousands of other Socialists. Eleven of the Socialist members of the Reichstag are at the front. The attitude of the party in the present crises is best shown by the action of one of their most famous leaders, who has been released after serving a sentence of one year for making an anti-militarist speech. He has issued an appeal to all members of the party to rush to the colors and to aid in saving the Fatherland."

The above communication not only disposes of this canard but also of other canards referred to by the boastful Mr. England.

It is doubtless true that in the Socialist halls, where it is easy for them to lash themselves into fury over the "horrors" of capitalism and war, a few of their leaders really think that they are cutting some figure, but the rank and file of the Socialist Party are made of men who are just as human and patriotic as the rank and file in any other of the political parties and, as in the case of Liebknecht, Vandervelde and some other leaders, treason has not destroyed their love for home and country.

The potential force of the Socialists in Europe is of as nebulous a quality as it is in this country. It is good for "scareheads" in the Socialist papers, and war fulminations from the Socialist literary bureaus, as well as furnishing great stuff for the soap box orators, but here it ends. The four million socialist voters in Germany are not Socialists at all. Probably not more than five or ten per cent of them would vote the Socialist ticket if they were citizens of this country. They would probably be Bull Moosers or Progressives of some kind. In Germany they are simply anti-monarchists and are fighting for a re-

publican form of government. Many here who have no sympathy for the Socialist philosophy, if living in Germany, would probably stand for the program of the Socialists as against that of the monarchists. If the Kaiser should be defeated in this war, a republican form of government would doubtless come out of the ruins but it would have no relation whatever to Socialism *per se*.

It can well be conceded that much of the declamation and argument against the horror of war and its terrible effect upon the working class is too true, but it would come with much greater force from the American Federation of Labor and the railway brotherhoods, who represent the working class in an organized capacity, rather than from the Socialist Party, which does not represent them; and, further, it would come better from them, because they have no ulterior motive in making such arguments. The organized labor movement knows full well that, if the Socialists ever became sufficiently formidable to produce a real revolution, the true working men would be among the first to rally to the colors to put it down. They are opposed to revolution, whether produced by crowned heads or by crazy heads.

In what I have said and in what I have quoted from Socialists themselves, I have not the least criticism to make of them. They are perfectly sincere and conscientious in their belief that the social institutions today should be overthrown, and, recognizing that this can only be done through bloodshed, they are, from a strategic standpoint, capturing every position that they can. I do not blame them for "putting it over" on the Peace Society or the preachers or the college men and sentimentalists generally, who have become so enamored of their revolutionary allies. It is, as I say, good tactics and good politics from their standpoint; but criticism certainly is to be made of the educated and supposedly intelligent classes of this country who will permit themselves to be so used.

Remember that, as the editor of *The Call* says, the Socialists hope that the forces at war in Europe, including the workingmen, will all "*bleed each other to exhaustion so that the coming social revolution may have an easier job of sweeping out the stinking fragments. We are through with protesting, mourning and deploring. That time has passed and now we stand for destruction—the destruction of capitalism.*"

Note No. 1.—Since the publication of the above article, a trade unionist has called my attention to a humorous aspect of the publication of the England article by the American Association for International Conciliation. As stated in a prefatory note to that pamphlet, this article was "reprinted from the organ of the Socialist Party in America, *The New York Call*." This trade unionist looked up the files of the paper and found that the original article contained a vigorous slap at the American Association for International Conciliation, the organization that has given his views to the public, which presumably, was eliminated from the article before it was bandied in. This is the extract:

"A new world power, for the first time * * * in tones of menace and authority declaring against war—crying 'War Against War! Peace, even if we have to fight to get it!'—this wrought the miracle. No Hague Tribunals, no professional peace society or Association for International Arbitration, no disarmament scheme of 'the great' (many of them engaged in manufacturing cannon and armor plate), no banquet devouring fraternity of white-waistcoated diplomats and grandees so much as lifted a finger—or a duck-laden fork—in face of the actual, impending slaughter. Not even one little finger. All these gentlemen promptly scurried to cover when the drums began to roll."

* * * * *

"A new world power capable of speaking in tones loud enough and authoritative enough to muzzle all the war dogs simultaneously succeeded where the professional peacemongers so signally failed to get results."

Other choice morsels excised by England are:

"The Berlin Socialists often turn out 200,000 or 300,000 strong * * * and reaffirm their determination to turn their rifles against the enemy at home, i. e., the capitalist and ruling class, before they will ever shoot their proletarian brothers of different race and speech."

* * * * *

"Let just this be said, and driven well home, that not through diplomacy, not through Hague conferences, not through church or state or royal

power will permanent world peace come, but just through the now crystallizing refusal of the common people to be taxed, suffer, march, shoot, die for their masters benefit—alias 'the flag'!"

But worse yet, after being so hospitably treated and highly honored by the American Association for International Conciliation, Mr. England published an article in *The Call* of August 9, in which he used most of the material that was published by that association, including also his old attack on it, which was not a very gracious thing for Dr. England to do.

Note No. 2.—I predicted in my article in *The Sun* that the real leaders of the Socialist Party would thank me for putting their true position before the public. This *The Call* promptly did in its issue of September 1, as follows:

"There has always been some difficulty in getting our propaganda clearly understood, and though we always insist upon accentuating the revolutionary character of Socialism, there are always great numbers who will persist in ranking us with reformers and futile mollicoddles of that species and its numerous variations.

"It is to undeceive these good people that Mr. Ralph Easley, of the Civic Federation, comes to the rescue, as he has done on many such occasions, and always insists on our revolutionary character, with the ostensible purpose of frightening the good people away from us. We say ostensible advisedly, and *The Call* is much indebted to Mr. Easley for his assistance in putting us right before the capitalistic minded public. We will take the chance of his doing us any harm.

"Recently we published an editorial purporting to give the stand of Socialists generally upon war, and of course discussing it wholly as to its effect in assisting the realization of social revolution. But there was one thing we had overlooked, and Mr. Easley kindly supplies it.

"He obligingly quotes almost our entire editorial in last Sunday's issue of the *New York Sun*, thus bringing it to the attention of at least some 45,000 readers we could not reach, and then warns the church folks, the peace society people, and what he calls 'humanitarians' generally, that our opposition to war is not based upon the

same considerations as theirs, and that they need not expect their views to be supported by us.

"That is overwhelmingly true, and it is the thing we had forgotten to mention. And we say again, we are obliged to Mr. Easley for thus emphasizing what we had overlooked.

'But let us add our indorsement to what he has said. The people he mentions have nothing to expect from us. We are decidedly not 'peace advocates' and 'humanitarians' in the sense they are. If we were, we should be attending peace conferences, praying in the churches for peace, and 'denouncing' war on 'principle,' as they imagine they do.

"We do oppose war on 'principle,' but it is our own principle, not theirs."

